

Coalition celebrates Romanian National Day

Story by Staff Sgt. Johnny A. Thompson
4th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – Uniting in brotherhood to commemorate a significant event in their partner's history members of the coalition force here gathered at the Parwan Provincial Reconstruction Team center in observance of Romanian National Day yesterday.

Hosted by the Romanian Army Detachment, the event afforded coalition partners the opportunity to learn more about Romanian's history and culture.

"December 1, 1918, was a moment of grace (for Romanian)," said Lt. Col. Mateiu Valentin,



Coalition Partners listens as U.S. Army Lt. Col. Bill Cojocar, CFLCC, translates Romanian Christmas carols as part of the Romanian National Day festivities.

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Pedagogy Teachers' Institute in Jalalabad opens

Story and photo by Sgt. 1st Class Angelita Colon-Francia
211th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

JALALABAD, Afghanistan – The Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) at Jalalabad recently celebrated the grand reopening of the Pedagogy Teachers' Institute in Jalalabad.

The school opening marks the return of the teachers' training institute that, under the Taliban's rule, was dismantled brick by brick in order to construct other buildings. All that remained of the school when U.S. civil military forces, the Islamic Transitional Government of Afghanistan (ITGA) and non-governmental organizations began the reconstruction project was its foundation.

"The rebuilding of Pedagogy is significant because this school will educate the future teachers of Afghanistan," said Capt. Dean P. Thompson of the 321st Civil Affairs Brigade out of San Antonio, Texas. "When the Taliban was here there wasn't much of a need for teachers and education in general suffered badly. The more teachers that are trained here, the more the education level in Afghanistan will improve."

Prior to the reconstruction of Pedagogy, classes were held outdoors. Student and teachers sat on the ground, vulnerable to weather conditions.

The new institute houses 16 classrooms and will accommodate 2,000 student-teachers in two shifts.

PRTs like the one in Jalalabad function to promote security and remove many of the causes of instability by extending the reach of the ITGA into regions beyond Afghanistan's capital.

PRTs maintain an understated presence that is non-threatening to the Afghan people through assistance, such as building schools, wells, medical clinics and conducting Cooperative Medical Assistance events.

PRTs also function as a safe platform from which civilian advisors provide technical expertise to assist in rebuilding projects.

The rebuilding of Afghanistan's schools and education system will help to address its current illiteracy problem and will demonstrate that life here is returning to normal.

There are approximately three million children in school here, almost one-third of them girls.

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World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



Putin is calling for a rapid transfer of power in Iraq.

Putin demands early elections

MOSCOW – Russian President Vladimir Putin, in a telephone call with U.S. President George Bush, has called for “the earliest possible elections” in Iraq.

Putin, according to his press service, also urged the “transfer of power to a new Iraqi leadership that is recognized by the whole people.”

Russia has consistently pushed for U.N. involvement in Iraq and a rapid transfer of political power to the Iraqi people.

The press service also said that Bush “praised Russia’s role” in Georgia, where the former president, Eduard Shevardnadze, stepped down in the face of massive street demonstrations sparked by fraudulent parliamentary elections.

Bush, the press service said, praised Russian efforts to prevent the revolution from degenerating into violence.

Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov flew to the Georgian capital, Tbilisi, during the disturbances to mediate between Shevardnadze and the opposition at a critical and dangerous moment.

Both presidents, according to the press service, urged international monitoring of the coming presidential and parliamentary elections in Georgia, scheduled for January 4, 2004.

Putin also informed Bush of a Russian initiative to settle the conflict between Moldova and the breakaway Transdniestrian region.

The two leaders expressed satisfaction with Russian-U.S. relations this year since Putin visited the United States.

They noted in particular contacts between Russian and U.S. government agencies and ministries which, they said, have helped to put their agreements into practice.



Mildred Muhammad is seen during her testimony at the trial of ex-husband John Allen Muhammad last month.

Sniper’s ex-wife: Muhammad was ‘magnet’ for children

CHESAPEAKE, Va.—John Allen Muhammad was a “magnet to children,” his ex-wife testified Monday in the trial of Lee Boyd Malvo, Muhammad’s alleged accomplice in the Washington-area sniper killings.

Mildred Muhammad, who also testified in her ex-husband’s trial, spent about half an hour on the stand as a witness for the defense in Malvo’s trial. Though Malvo admitted to police that he was the triggerman in most of the sniper killings, his lawyers argue that Muhammad brainwashed the teen into participating in the attacks.

Muhammad “was a magnet to children,” Mildred Muhammad said. “He was, I guess, that father figure they were looking for.”

She described how she met Muhammad, married him, traveled with him during his time in the Army and divorced him in 1999. The couple had three children, and she described Muhammad as a “controlling” parent.

“He was the disciplinarian sometimes, but his tactics were that he had to have complete control of them,” she said.

Malvo, 18, is charged with the Oct. 14, 2002, killing of FBI analyst Linda Franklin outside a Fairfax, Virginia, store. He has pleaded not guilty to capital murder and terrorism charges. His trial resumed Monday after a break for the Thanksgiving holiday.

Iraqi police disputes death toll

SAMARRA, Iraq—U.S. and Iraqi authorities disagreed Monday on how many Iraqis were killed when U.S. forces repelled simultaneous ambushes during a currency-exchange operation at

two banks in Samarra this past weekend.

The battles were described as intense, with small-arms fire escalating into rocket-propelled grenade and mortar attacks.

“There I am in the middle of a huge firefight with bullets and mortars and RPGs falling all around me,” recalled Staff Sgt. Bruce Jones.

Samarra is about 75 miles (120 kilometers) north of Baghdad.

U.S. military intelligence officials on the scene said 46 insurgents were killed, 18 wounded and 11 taken prisoner. Those numbers differed slightly from what was reported in Baghdad, with coalition spokesman Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt saying 54 Iraqis were killed in the battle.

Kimmitt said five U.S. soldiers and one member of the currency-exchange team were wounded in the battle, none with life-threatening injuries, and said both currency-exchange operations were concluded successfully. Kimmitt said the casualty reports were “visual battlefield reports ... from soldiers involved in the engagement.”

Priest challenges late abortion

LONDON—A female curate has won the chance to take the police to court over its refusal to prosecute doctors who, she says, carried out an “unlawful” late abortion for ostensibly cosmetic reasons.

The Reverend Joanna Jepson, who herself underwent corrective surgery on a congenital jaw defect as a teenager, was given permission to challenge the police after going to the High Court in London, Monday.

The mother, who cannot be named for legal reasons, is reported to have had the abortion because she did not want a baby born with a cleft palate. She was more than 24 weeks pregnant—the legal limit for abortions unless a risk of serious disability is diagnosed.

Rev. Jepson, curate of St Michael’s Church in Chester, mid England, believes the abortion should not have been allowed because a cleft palate is not a serious handicap.

She told the BBC that terminating the pregnancy simply because of a cleft palate was an “outrageous” decision that must be challenged.

“It is a case of unlawful killing,” the 27-year-old added. “And like any unlawful killing it is only right that the person responsible is brought to account for it.”

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commander of the Romanian Detachment, as he read the proclamation of Romanian National Day. "In the wake of the Great War ... on this day provinces with Romanian majority were re-united with Romania."

Valentin stated that although Romania was unified in 1918 it still was under the control of the "Iron Curtain of communism" until the fall of communism in Europe in 1989; thereafter, re-establishing its democracy.

"To preserve and improve its democratic evolution, Romania has only one objective – to be part of the Euro Atlantic Security structure and part of Europe," Valentin added. "Next year, Romania will be (a) full member of

NATO and in 2007 will accede to European Union."

The proclamation was followed by the playing of the Romanian National Anthem and afterward the playing of four popular Romanian Christmas carols.

The carols, translated into the English language by Lt. Col. Bill Cojocar, Combined Forces Land Component Command liaison, a U.S. Army Soldier of Romanian descent, described the birth of Jesus and spoke about His importance to the world. Immediately following the songs refreshments were served as coalition forces viewed a PowerPoint presentation and read literature about Romania.

"It was very important to be here and celebrate their national day," said Cojocar. "It's

beneficial for them to see that [the coalition] recognizes and supports their holidays because it reinforces our commitment to each other as partners."

Iterating Cojocar's words, the host of the event shared time with each coalition partner explaining Romania's history and showing them some of the finer locations in the country through books, computer images and postcards.

"We are here (in Afghanistan) living and fighting together so it's important that we understand each other's history and culture," said Maj. Ovidiu Matei, coalition transportation officer for the Romanian Detachment. "We can see that we share a lot of the same values once we get to know each other better."

Rumsfeld praises NATO's transformation and progress

Story by John D. Banusiewicz
American Forces Press Service

BRUSSELS, Belgium – Praising the alliance's transformation to meet its 21st century challenges, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said here today that the United States supports an expanded role for NATO, especially in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Rumsfeld met with reporters at NATO headquarters, where he's attending a conference of the alliance's defense ministers.

The steps NATO has taken in the last two years reflect more positive change for the alliance than any previous 10-year period in its history, Rumsfeld said. He cited the creation of the NATO response force and the new biological, chemical, radiological and nuclear defense battalion that attained its initial operational status today as examples of the alliance's progress. Transformation of NATO's command structure - reducing its number of commands by about half - and the ongoing streamlining of its headquarters staff are other positive developments, he added.

As NATO transforms itself, Rumsfeld said, its emphasis on capabilities is right on the mark. "The more the United States has looked at our circumstances, and the more NATO has looked at NATO's circumstance," Rumsfeld said, "we have tended to move toward a capabilities-based approach." He said this involves a totally different brand of thinking from the traditional emphasis on numbers of troops and munitions.

"The real world today is that a single precision bomb can do what six, eight or 10 'dumb' bombs can do," the secretary said. "If you have 10 dumb bombs and you reduce them by five and replace them with five smart bombs, the idea that you've cut your capability in half is nonsense. You've actually vastly increased your capability." Speed and flexibility are more important than mass, he said, and he praised NATO for moving ag-

gressively in that direction.

The alliance's relatively low number of deployable forces is a problem, he said, especially as the alliance discusses taking on more missions. As NATO prepares for its upcoming summit meeting, scheduled for Istanbul in May 2004, Rumsfeld said member nations must address the problem by eliminating forces that are unusable against 21st-century threats and seeing that the savings are re-invested into needed allied capabilities.

Rumsfeld said the work of the alliance's International Security Assistance Force operating in the Afghan capital of Kabul – NATO's first foray into operating outside its treaty area - has gone well. He added the alliance has agreed to expand that role with more provincial reconstruction teams elsewhere in the country. He also said preliminary conceptual discussions have begun about NATO possibly taking the lead role in Afghanistan military operations.

Noting that NATO also is supporting the Polish-and-Spanish-led division in Iraq and that many NATO countries have sent troops to Iraq, Rumsfeld said the United States supports an expanded role for NATO in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

With speculation abounding over a meeting last week of the European Union in Naples, Italy, Rumsfeld didn't take the bait when reporters pressed him for an opinion on a EU mutual defense and planning function separate from NATO.

The secretary said he knows of no decisions made at the EU meeting in that regard. He also noted he's confident the EU would not do anything to duplicate NATO capabilities or compete with the alliance. Earlier, NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson emphatically expressed the same point of view.

The secretary thanked Robertson for his "remarkable leadership" during his four-year term, which ends in five weeks, calling the former British defense minister "a steady hand and force for positive change."

The defense ministers will wrap up their conference today.

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“Once teachers start graduating from here, I think it will make a huge impact on the community,” said Sgt. Melissa M. Barclay of the 407th Civil Affairs Battalion from Arden Hills, Minn. “Over time, even the economy will pick up as a result of better teaching. But, it is going to take time.”

Although the Jalalabad PRT will officially open in December, the team has already completed three projects and have 26 underway, including a project to distribute 35,000 school desks to various schools in the Nangarhar province.

So far, there are six Coalition-run PRTs operational in Afghanistan: Gardez (U.S.-sponsored), Bamian (New Zealand-sponsored), Konduz (German-sponsored), Mazar-e-Sharif (United Kingdom-sponsored), Kandahar (U.S.-sponsored) and Parwan (U.S. and Korea-sponsored).

Presently, there are plans to standup a total of nine PRTs in Afghanistan, including sites in Herat and Ghazni.



Col. Mackey K. Hancock, commander of the Coalition Joint Civil Military Operational Task Force, and the governor of the Nangarhar province, Haji Din Mohammad, speak before the opening of the Pedagogy Teachers' Institute in Jalalabad.

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

“Kingpin” Mini Series

1530Z at the MWR building:

1300L/0830Z

2000L/1530Z

Tomorrow's movie: “Lara Croft - The Cradle of Life”

Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	Today	Wednesday
<u>Bagram:</u>	<i>Mostly Cloudy</i> H: 59F L: 34F	<i>Mostly Cloudy</i> H: 57F L: 32F
<u>Kandahar:</u>	<i>Mostly Cloudy</i> H: 63F L: 37F	<i>Mostly Cloudy</i> H: 59F L: 39F
<u>Kabul:</u>	<i>Mostly Cloudy</i> H: 59F L: 34F	<i>Mostly Cloudy</i> H: 55F L: 30F
<u>Uzbekistan:</u>	<i>Partly Cloudy</i> H: 51F L: 28F	<i>Partly cloudy</i> H: 56F L: 30F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from SI.com)

D'backs get Sexson in 9-player trade

PHOENIX – Right after trading off a power pitcher, the Arizona Diamondbacks acquired a power hitter who ranks among the best in the game.

The Diamondbacks got Richie Sexson from Milwaukee in a nine-player deal Monday that sent infielder Craig Counsell and second baseman Junior Spivey to the Brewers.

First baseman Lyle Overbay, catcher Chad Moeller and left-handers Jorge De La Rosa and Chris Capuano also were dealt to Milwaukee.

In addition to Sexson, Arizona received left-hander Shane Nance and a player to be named.

"I'm pretty excited," Sexson said in a conference call. "I enjoyed my time in Milwaukee, but as a player, we obviously play to win, and it got tough in Milwaukee."

The deal was finalized after Curt Schilling passed his physical with the Boston Red Sox.

De La Rosa was one of four players sent to Arizona for Schilling, and could not be traded until the Schilling deal was finalized.

"He was the Red Sox's best pitching prospect," Brewers general manager Doug Melvin said. "He's ahead of our young pitchers. We were reluctant to do the deal unless he was in the deal."



Two-time All-Star Richie Sexson matched a career high with 45 home runs last season.

Croom takes Miss. State job, becomes first black head coach in SEC history

STARKVILLE, Miss. – Sylvester Croom became the first black head football coach in Southeastern Conference history, accepting an offer Monday to take over troubled Mississippi State.

"We went after the best football coach and we're confident we found that individual in Sylvester Croom," athletic director Larry Templeton said.

Croom informed Templeton that he would take the job less than 24 hours after Templeton said he had offered it. A news conference will be held Tuesday to introduce him.

Croom, 49, has never been a head coach, but has been an NFL assistant with five teams since 1987 and worked for Bear Bryant and Ray Perkins at Alabama from 1977-86.

The SEC's hiring history came under increased scrutiny earlier this year when Croom was passed over for the top job at his alma mater, Alabama, in favor of Mike Shula, another former Crimson Tide player, who is white.

McNair to start against Jets

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. – Tennessee Titans quarterback Steve McNair was in the starting lineup against the New York Jets on Monday night despite a strained right calf.

McNair was injured last week against Atlanta but an MRI exam showed limited damage and he did not practice. Titans coach Jeff Fisher made the decision a few hours before kickoff.

The NFL's top-rated passer has played through injuries in the past. Last season, McNair took a shot for the pain in his strained ribs and rallied Tennessee to a 32-29 overtime victory Dec. 1 on the same field.

Injuries kept McNair from practicing the final five weeks of last season, yet he led the Titans to five wins and a first-round bye in the playoffs.

McNair is having the best season of his nine-year career. He has thrown for 18 touchdowns with only four interceptions while completing 65.3 percent of his passes. His 106.3 passer rating is more than 16 points better than his previous best of 90.2 set in 2001.

Also, Titans defensive end Jevon Kearse was inactive for the second straight week with a sprained left ankle, and Jets end John Abraham was inactive with a strained right groin.



Steve McNair missed the second half of last week's come-from-behind victory over Atlanta.

Mild-mannered Duncan gets suspension

NEW YORK – Tim Duncan of the San Antonio Spurs was suspended for one game by the NBA on Monday for pushing an official to the floor.

The two-time league MVP and five-time all-star made contact with Jack Nies in the third quarter of the Spurs' loss Saturday night to the Golden State Warriors.

Duncan was setting a pick near the Spurs' 3-point line as Nies was trying to untangle himself from another player. Duncan cut to the high post, put both hands on the official to clear some room, and Nies tumbled to the floor. The official quickly got up and called a technical.

Duncan, also the series MVP when the Spurs won the NBA title last spring, was out of the lineup for Monday night's game against the Los Angeles Clippers.

Afghanistan Hot Topics



(Compiled by CJTF-180 Public Affairs)

U.S. deploys military reconstruction team in western province of Herat

KABUL, Afghanistan (RFE/RL) – The United States has established a military reconstruction team in the western Afghan province of Herat bordering Iran.

U.S. military spokesman Bryan Hilferty said the 50-member group began operating in Herat today and will also oversee projects in three neighboring provinces.

Five similar groups, known as Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT), are operating in different parts of Afghanistan (Bamiyan, Konduz, Mazar-e Sharif, Gardez, and Parwan). PRT members participate in small reconstruction projects and provide security for aid work in urban areas.

Aid groups and UN institutions have criticized the deployment of the military teams in the safest areas of Afghanistan while avoiding deployments danger zones where humanitarian assistance is badly needed.

NATO took over command of one of the PRTs and agreed to do so with other teams as soon as the necessary resources become available.

First Lady wants to go to Afghanistan after husband returns from trip to Iraq

WASHINGTON (FOX News) – Just three days after President Bush returned from a surprise trip to Baghdad, his wife Laura Bush disclosed that she is considering a trip to Afghanistan next spring.

She said, “I’d really like to go. I hope I’ll have a chance.”

Her statement caught her aides by surprise, but it wasn’t the first time that Mrs. Bush had disclosed a secret. She announced that the president would make a state visit to Britain long before it was announced officially.

The first lady made the comment as she was discussing the president’s trip to Baghdad last week, in which he served Thanksgiving dinner to U.S. troops at Baghdad airport and met with Iraqi officials during a two-and-a-half-hour stay.

Mrs. Bush says her husband called from Air Force One not long after takeoff from Baghdad and told her — in her words — “how sweet it was.”

She said that she was sorry that she didn’t get to go with the president, and would like to visit Iraq and Afghanistan in the future.

Mrs. Bush’s press secretary, Gordon Johndroe, said it was too early to discuss a trip to Afghanistan and that there was “nothing on the calendar yet.”

Mrs. Bush spoke with reporters in the White House drive-

way as she received the official White House Christmas tree, an 18 1/2 foot Fraser fir from Wisconsin.

Rumsfeld wants NATO to eventually run Afghan mission, AP says

(Bloomberg) – U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld wants the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to eventually assume control of the military mission in Afghanistan, the *Associated Press* reported in an interview.

Rumsfeld said he hadn’t yet made a proposal, though he favors a NATO transition from U.S. control, *AP* reported. Rumsfeld’s remarks came on the eve of a NATO defense ministers’ conference in Brussels this week.

U.S.-led forces continue to seek holdouts of the Taliban rule that collapsed in Afghanistan two years ago, *AP* reported.

Rumsfeld doesn’t expect alliance troops to completely replace U.S. troops, *AP* reported. There are 10,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan, *AP* said.

“I’ve fallen, and I can’t get up.”



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By Kevin Kilgore

Laugh Support